



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
UNITED STATES COURT HOUSE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98101
(206) 370-8800

JOHN C. COUGHENOUR
United States District Judge

May 26, 2020

Dear counsel,

As reflected in the General Orders recently issued by the Western District of Washington, the coronavirus pandemic has substantially affected the Court's ability to conduct in-person proceedings. It is the considered view of most judges in the Western District of Washington that criminal jury trials are not likely to resume prior to 2021. The Court cannot configure its courtroom for trial to comply with the social distancing guidelines promulgated by local and national health officials, and the Court is not confident that potential jurors will (or should) respond to subpoenas before they are convinced that it is safe to do so. Therefore, the Court will continue the trial dates in pending criminal matters consistent with future General Orders, which exclude the time of such continuances under the Speedy Trial Act.

However, the Court believes that it is important to maintain existing case schedules to the greatest extent possible under the current circumstances. Therefore, in granting future continuances of trial dates, the Court will keep case management dates the same absent a showing of good cause. This will ensure that trials are efficiently resolved once in-court proceedings are safe for the parties, counsel, and jurors.

Very truly yours,

John C. Coughenour
United States District Judge
Western District of Washington